

Message Text

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1. DACCA, AUGUST 22 - EXPERTS FROM TEN COUNTRIES MET NEAR DACCA YESTERDAY (WEDNESDAY) FOR A SIX-DAY SEMINAR ON DEEP-WATER RICE. IT IS THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE EVER HELD ON THIS RICE CROP, WHICH IS

WIDELY GROWN IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA.

2. THE SEMINAR WAS ORGANIZED BY THE BANGLADESH RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND THE BANGLADESH MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE IN COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE, THE FORD FOUNDATION AND THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION.

3. IT IS BEING HELD IN THE INSTITUTE'S MAIN RESEARCH STATION AT JOYDEBPUR, TWENTY-TWO MILES NORTH OF THE BANGLADESH CAPITAL.

4. DEEP-WATER RICE, ALSO KNOWN AS FLOATING RICE, HAS A UNIQUE CAPACITY TO ELONGATE WITH THE RISE OF FLOODWATER IN THE MONSOON SEASON. PLANTS GROW AS MUCH AS ONE FOOT

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A DAY, THRIVE IN WATER FIFTEEN FEET DEEP, AND REACH A

LENGTH OF MORE THAN TWENTY FEET.

5. WITH FIVE MILLION ACRES PLANTED TO THIS CROP, BANGLADESH PROBABLY RANKS FIRST AMONG DEEP-WATER-RICE-GROWING COUNTRIES. BUT EVEN COMPARED WITH OTHER TRADITIONAL RICE CROPS, DEEP-WATER RICE YIELD IS VERY LOW. IT IS HARMED BY DROUGHT AND IRREGULAR RAINFALL, AND IS DIFFICULT TO HARVEST. FOR AN ESTIMATED EIGHTEEN MILLION FARM PEOPLE IN BANGLADESH WHO DEPEND ON IT AS THEIR MAIN CROP, LIFE IS UNCERTAIN.

6. THUS BANGLADESH MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE ABDUS SAMAD AZAD, WHO INAUGURATED THE SEMINAR YESTERDAY, EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT IT WOULD QUOTE HERALD A NEW STRATEGIC BREAKTHROUGH IN THE HISTORY OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION UNQUOTE.

7. HE SAID THE SEMINAR QUOTE WILL GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY NOT ONLY TO KNOW THE MOST INTRICATE PROBLEMS OF DEEP-WATER RICE, BUT ALSO THE POSSIBILITIES AS TO HOW THIS RICE AND THE PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES CAN BE IMPROVED FOR AN INCREASED AND SAFER YIELD UNQUOTE.

8. ABOUT FIFTY BENGALEE AND THIRTY FOREIGN SCIENTISTS ARE TAKING PART IN THE SEMINAR. THE FOREIGN PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF INDIA, INDONESIA, JAPAN, MALAYSIA, SRILANKA AND THAILAND, OF IGF1 IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND OF FAO, THE FORD FOUNDATION, USAID AND

THE WORLD BANK.

9. AMONG AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS ARE TWO MEN WHO HAVE PLAYED IMPORTANT PARTS IN THE GREEN REVOLUTION. THEY ARE DOCTOR ROBERT F. CHANDLER, JR., FOUNDER AND FIRST DIRECTOR OF IGLI, AND H.M. BEACHELL, KNOWN AS THE FATHER OF IR-8 RICE.

10. DOCTOR CHANDLER, WHO IS NOW DIRECTOR OF THE ASIAN UNCLASSIFIED

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VEGETABLE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN TAIWAN, TOLD THE OPENING SESSION OF THE SEMINAR THAT WHATEVER THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN DEEP-WATER RICE CULTIVATION, HARD WORK AND PERSEVERANCE COULD OVERCOME THEM.

1. THE SEMINAR IS CHAIRED BY DOCTOR M. AMIRUL ISLAM, DIRECTOR OF THE BANGLADESH RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE. THE INSTITUTE IS AN AUTONOMOUS BODY

ESTABLISHED IN 1970. IT IS ASSISTED BY BRITISH AND
AMERICAN ADVKERS PROVIDED BY IRRI THROUGH A
CONTRACT WITH THE FORD FOUNDATION.
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